



**MEMORANDUM**  
8 OCTOBER 2004

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: DAVID MERRITT

RE: RUEDI RESERVOIR AND FRYING PAN RIVER ISSUES

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We are still working through the process of securing our additional Ruedi Reservoir contract of 5000 acre feet. The USBR-Loveland Office discovered in late June that they had to go through “agency scoping” with Federal and State agencies prior to issuing this contract. Through this process, we received comments from the USFWS expressing concern over our potential uses of this water. We had stated that the primary use would be for Municipal and Industrial uses in the Colorado River basin below Glenwood Springs, expecting it to take until 2020 to fully contract this supply. In the interim, we would use the available water on a year to year basis for recreational and environmental demands, such as providing water for the 15 Mile Reach when Woford water was not available. The USFWS requested clarification as to how this would be done, and we were able to have a meeting among all parties last week to address this issue. I remain hopeful that we can get this water under contract by the end of this calendar year.

This will cost approximately \$350,000/year until the year 2019, when we will have paid the capital component off, and will be only obligated for Operation, Maintenance & Replacement (OM&R) costs. While this is indeed a significant investment, it positions the Water Marketing program of the River District very well to deal adequately with future West Slope water demands. The supplies provided by this water repayment contract, in conjunction with our current Woford and Eagle River supplies, will allow us to address much of the demands projected in the middle Colorado River Basin over the next 20 years, as well as have the flexibility to respond to drought events that may recur.

The Frying Pan this year is similar to the other basins; while Ruedi Reservoir nearly filled last year, getting to a storage level of over 97,000 acre feet (capacity is 102,000 acre feet), it only recovered to 93,700 acre feet this year. . Last year, it provided nearly all of its 20,825 acre feet of water committed to the Recovery program, and in fact, provided most of the entire volume of water made

available to the program. Last year and this year, Williams Fork Reservoir only provided 70% of the East Slope 5,412 acre feet, Wolford provided no 5412 water, and no “Surplus” or “Excess Surplus” releases were made from Green Mountain Reservoir. Additionally, the USFWS chose not to use the water in its 10% Wolford Pool, instead deciding to carry it forward to a “non-rainy” day. While Reclamation ultimately decided to make the entire 20,825 available from Ruedi Reservoir this year, it is concerned over the winter flow and the elevation Ruedi will be at the start of fill next year. Approximately 10,000 acre feet was used this past winter in maintaining an optimum winter flow of 85 cfs, compared to meeting the ISF of 40 cfs or inflow. As a result Reclamation had to reduce the winter base flow from 85 cfs to 40 cfs in March, in effort to conserve storage. This year, they will probably run at a lower winter level, 50 to 60 cfs. USBR wants to refill the reservoir (as we all do) and are torn between meeting desired winter flows for the game fish, and meeting the increasing demands placed upon the reservoir.

This is largely the result of the USBR agreeing to consider the findings of both the Economic Study and the Fishery Study in future operational changes. These studies were the results of collaborative efforts among the Roaring Fork Conservancy, the River District, the Ruedi Water and Power Authority, and the Homestake Partners, and were coordinated by the Roaring Fork Conservancy and will continue into the future. As we move toward 2019, a date by which Ruedi Reservoir must be repaid, we need to be able to articulate how we wish to see Ruedi operated in the future, and how we will secure repayment to the Federal Government for the Reservoir.